

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

God had suggested to them. You have gone on in your own fashion ; and I was never able to confer with them, although, when I asked for the letter of credentials, you told me that you would tell them that we should confer together about everything. Your humble words proceeded more from fear and need than from the spirit of love and virtue. But do you not see how much evil and how many untoward things have come from your obstinacy ? Alas, alas ! loose yourselves from the league of pride, and league yourselves with the humble Lamb ; do not despise or act against His vicar. No more so, for the love of Christ crucified ! Do not scorn His blood ; but do in the present time what has not been done in the past. Do not conceive bitterness or indignation, if it should seem to you that the Holy Father demands what appears to you very hard and impossible to do. He will not want more than lies in your power. But he is acting like a true father who punishes his son when he does wrong ; he rebukes him severely to make him grow humble and acknowledge his fault; and the good son is not angry with his father, because he sees that what he does is done for love of him. So I say to you, in the name of Christ crucified, that, as often as you are spurned by our father, Christ on earth, so often must you fly back to him. Trust in him, for he is right.

" And now he is coming to his spouse, to the place of St. Peter and St. Paul. See that you run to him at once, with true humility of heart and amendment for your faults, following the holy beginning with which you began. If you do so, you will have spiritual and bodily peace ; but, if you act in other fashion, our ancestors never had such great woes as we shall have ; for we shall be calling the anger of God upon us, and shall not partake of the blood of the Lamb. I say no more. Be as zealous as you can, now that the Holy Father will be at Rome. I have done, and will do, all that I can, even to death, for the honour of God and for your peace, and in order that this obstacle may be taken away, for it impedes the sweet and holy passage. If no other evil resulted from it, we should be worthy of a thousand hells. Take comfort in Christ, our sweet Jesus, for I hope in